ADVENTIST DOCTRINES.

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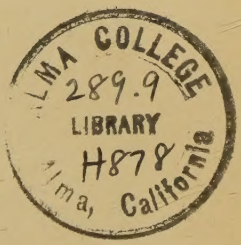

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ADVENTIST DOCTRINES.

PART I. GENERAL SURVEY.

DURING several years past we have been receiving letters from correspondents sending us various tracts, pamphlets and journals which are being widely circulated by the sect called "Seventh Day Adventists"; and telling us that since the publications were disturbing the minds of the simpler class of Catholics, it was desirable to antidote the mischief by writing a refutation of the Adventist doctrines, and circulating it in a cheap and convenient tract. We dealt briefly at the time with the salient points, and promised to take up the subject more systematically later on. A recent correspondent now reminds us of this unfulfilled promise, and asks us to carry it out. This we now intend to do. It is not our plan to engage in a controversial wrangle on details, as this would involve quite a long series. What we mean to do is rather to treat the subject on broad lines which will appeal in the first place to the principles governing the subject, and in the second place to the intelligence and common-sense of our readers.

The Adventist sect is of quite recent origin, but the doctrines they make their own are not altogether new. Some of their tenets are fairly in accordance with the general creed of Christendom. Their belief in God and in Jesus Christ seems to be more or less normal. If they say that the atonement was not achieved on the cross, they only mean that by the death of Christ all mankind was not *ipso facto* raised to the state of salvation, but that the sacrifice achieved on Calvary needed subsequent application to each individual soul —which is quite in agreement with the ordinary teaching. Their belief in baptism seems to be orthodox,

only they apparently withhold it from infants and insist on immersion.

INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY.

One of their peculiarities is to say that prophecy is not veiled in mystery, but can be understood and definitely interpreted by all who study it ; and that by this study the religious future of the world, including the end of it, can be ascertained. With this we can hardly agree ; and in justification of our disagreement we can point to the tremendous number of attempts to interpret prophecy which have been made in every age, all of which have in the event proved to be wrong. We believe that many of the prophecies were chiefly meant to serve a certain purpose when they were made, for the benefit of the people to whom they were made ; that they were not always intended to convey a clear and definite idea, but rather to reveal a tendency of divine providence which would certainly work itself out in the lines indicated, the time and manner of the fulfilment being left obscure and sometimes altogether concealed. We also believe that many prophecies are veiled in figure and allegory, not admitting of a literal interpretation.

This view, which is that of Christians generally, is fully borne out by the divergent and contradictory interpretations to which certain prophecies (especially those of Daniel and Revelation, of which the Adventists are specially fond) have been subjected. The early history of the Adventists themselves affords a signal instance of this. They owed their origin to one William Miller (1781-1844) who in 1841 issued a system of prophetic interpretations as to the second coming, which was to take place in 1843. As usual with such prophecies, the event did not come off. One of Miller's disciples then proceeded to find a mistake in his master's calculation, and fixed the advent anew

for October 22nd, 1844. When the time approached, numbers of people gave up their occupations and waited feverishly for the coming. But again nothing happened. The sect held a meeting next year, in which they still professed their belief in the nearness of the event, but gave up assigning the date. Later on Miller's mistake was covered rather ingeniously by saying (as I find it stated in a tract before me) that "the mistake of the Adventists in 1844 pertained to the nature of the event then to transpire, not to the time ; that no prophetic period is given to reach the second advent, but that the longest one (the two thousand and three hundred days of Dan. 8-14) terminated in 1844, and brought us to an event called 'the cleansing of the sanctuary.'" They then proceed to tell us that this "cleansing of the sanctuary" is an event which takes place not on earth but in heaven ; and therefore its occurrence lies altogether outside the range of investigation.

Such a device is really *too* transparent. It is just as if Mr. Gandhi, having prophecied that India would have Home Rule in October 1921, were now to tell us that he did not mean actual Home Rule at that date, but only that a preliminary event connected with the coming of Home Rule in the future would take place in heaven at that time. Such a statement, being incapable of verification, would have to be accepted with implicit faith if it were taken at all. Under such circumstances one would naturally ask : "If that is what Mr. Gandhi really meant, why did he not say what he meant instead of saying something quite different which did *not* take place at all."

This is what has always happened whenever people have attempted to interpret prophecies about the end of the world—of which hundreds of instances could be collected together. In every case the event fails

to come off; and then the prophet explains that he made a mistake in his calculations, either as to the time or the nature of the event; or else lies low till people have forgotten all about it.

THE BIBLE AS RULE OF FAITH.

As regards other doctrines, the Adventists hold (with Protestants in general) that "Holy Scripture contains a full revelation, and is the only infallible rule of faith and practice." They do not go on to tell us how dismally Holy Scripture has failed to serve this purpose. Although the Bible in itself is infallibly true in what it means, no human being is infallible in understanding it. There is hardly a verse of doctrinal import which has not given rise to different interpretations. But of different interpretations all cannot be right; and if contradictory, all but one must be wrong. And yet no individual reader has any right to set himself up as infallible, and to say that he alone understands the passage rightly while everybody who differs from him is wrong.

If we take for instance the interpretations of the Scripture which are scattered about over the Adventist literature which lies before us, there are here and there a few points on which Christians generally will agree; but in nearly all cases there exist bodies of Christians who would disagree with the Adventist's view, and would uphold their own interpretation quite as cleverly as the Adventists uphold theirs. This being so, who is to say which side is right? No; if there is one proposition rather than another which has been proved by centuries of trial to be false, it is the proposition that the Bible, *as interpreted by the individual*, provides us with an infallible rule either of faith or practice.

The Catholic contention fits in much better with the facts. The Catholic contention is that while some

parts of divine revelation were delivered in writing (e. g. the ten commandments, and certain inspired utterances of the prophets) the great bulk of revelation was in the first instance delivered by word of mouth. This is true, for instance, of a great part of the Mosaic code, which was first delivered by Moses orally, and only afterwards put in writing. It is true of all the teaching of Christ, which was only put into writing years after his death—and even then not all of it was written down, as St. John clearly witnesses as well as St. Luke. The teaching of the apostles was delivered orally, and only some portions of it were, by St. Paul and others, incidentally communicated to different churches and individuals by letter. This being the case, it seems entirely reasonable to suppose that there are parts of the Christian revelation which escaped mention in the Gospels and Epistles, and that these portions include points of doctrine and practice, and also interpretations of the Scriptures themselves, which were handed down solely by tradition. Hence St. Paul, though he says that "whatever is written, is written for our learning," does not say: "Hold fast to the Bible and interpret it for yourself, and tell others to do the same." What he says is quite different: "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard from me in faith" (2 Tim. I, 13) or: "Hold fast to the traditions which you have learnt, whether by word or by our Epistle." (2 Thes. II, 14). St. Peter moreover declares that no prophecy is of private interpretation, and warns his readers that there are in the letters of Paul "some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." (2 Pet. III, 16).

Hence the attitude which we find prevailing throughout the history of the Church from the very first.

The bishops and clergy held a tradition of the faith which they preserved with care, and read the Bible in the light of that tradition. If any one took up the Bible and began to interpret it in a sense counter to that tradition, the Church was at once up in arms, and condemned the man as a heretic, and reasserted the traditional doctrine. At the same time the Church used Scripture in her own support against the heresy; for while she denied to individuals the power to interpret Scripture infallibly, she herself claimed infallibility in her own interpretation, because she was the responsible custodian of the faith, and had the divine assistance in her explanation of it.

Of course the Adventists will waive all this aside. But in doing so they are waiving aside the evidence both of history and of experience. They will deny, of course, that the Church is infallible, but they cannot claim to be infallible themselves. Therefore if the Church's interpretation of Scripture can be wrong, *their* interpretations can just as well be wrong. And since it is not the Bible, but the interpretation of the Bible, which gives us points of faith and practice, it follows that if neither the Church nor the individual is infallible, there remains to us no infallible rule of faith and practice at all. The conclusion is that the Bible, if it was ever intended by God to be such an infallible rule, has (as we said at the beginning) dismally failed to achieve its object.

Of this no other proof is needed than the enormous number of divergent sects, each differing from the rest in important points of faith and practice, which have come into existence as the result of the Protestant Reformation and its foundation principle that "the Bible, and the Bible only, as interpreted by the individual, is the one sole and adequate rule of faith."

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Another doctrine of the Adventists is that the ten commandments delivered to Moses constitute "an immutable and perpetual" code of laws; so that each and every one of them is binding on us to-day as it was binding on the Hebrews, without any possible abrogation or modification.

What we have to say on this question is as follows: Most of the Mosaic laws are simply a declaration of the essential laws of morality, such as worshipping the one true God, honouring parents, committing no murder, adultery or theft, not bearing false witness, and not coveting other people's things. These laws existed as laws before they were revealed on Sinai; for they are parts of the law of right and wrong, and are founded on the ethical essence of things. Even if Moses had never received such commandments they would have been binding on all mankind just the same. God on that occasion merely called attention to them, and insisted on their observance by a people who needed instruction and correction; and that is all.

But there are in the commandments two points of a different nature. The making of graven images is in itself quite an innocent occupation. Every statue and carving is a graven image, and pictures are likenesses of things above or on or under the earth. The commandment contains no restriction in its wording; and although God himself ordered Moses to make a brazen serpent, and images of cherubim on the ark, etc., still the Jews understood this law literally, and refrained from making any kind of image or likeness. The Christian Church on the other hand never had any difficulty on the subject. Wall paintings were made in the Catecombs in the second century; and soon after images in relief and even statues. This means that Christians regarded that point of the Mosaic law as pro-

visional and temporary, as a precaution against idolatry; and when the danger of idolatry ceased to be associated with images, the general prohibition no longer held good.

On this point nothing more need be said, as the Adventists do not bring it up in any special way. We only have to remark that their tracts are full of pictures which are likenesses of things in heaven and on earth and under the earth; and this involves a tacit acknowledgment that the Mosaic law does admit of a change in its interpretation and application in that one point at least.

THE SABBATH LAW.

Another commandment is that regarding the Sabbath; and it is from this that the Seventh Day Adventists derive their name. They hold that this law is just as binding now as it ever was, and that the whole of Christendom has gone wrong throughout the centuries, and is systematically disobeying this commandment by observing the Sunday instead; and they even tell us that this means a universal apostasy from God calling for his direct punishment. They throw all the blame on the Pope, whom they hold to be the Beast of the Revelation, who corrupted the Church in the Middle Ages and held Christendom in bondage till the glorious light of the Protestant Reformation dispelled the darkness.

That is what Protestants in general have been saying ever since they came into existence in the 16th century. But now these Adventists, dating from about 1844, suddenly step in and turn round on the Protestants themselves, and accuse them of having adhered to the error and corruption of Rome at least in one point, that in by continuing to observe the Sunday instead of the Sabbath. Thus the whole of Christendom, Catholic and Protestant, stands in the same condemnation, except

this small and recent sect of the Adventists, who have been raised up by God to rectify this most sinful and wicked error.

PART II. SABBATH OR SUNDAY.

A HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

THE history of this question in the Early Church can be summed up in the following concise way :—The first convert communities in the time of the Apostles were Jewish communities, not only in Jerusalem and Galilee, but in the towns of Asia Minor, Greece and even Rome itself. It was natural for the Jews (who differed from their fellow-Jews only in this, that they had accepted the Messias and his teaching) to keep up their Jewish practices, especially as Christ had come "not to destroy but to fulfil the law." So long as the Temple continued to stand, the Jews of Jerusalem at least continued to frequent it as a place of prayer ; and it is quite possible that they attended the feasts and sacrifices as well. The apostles also prayed and preached in the temple. St. Paul joined in a temple-ceremony connected with vows, and even had Timothy circumcised to appease the prejudices of the Jews. When the temple was destroyed in A. D. 70, it became clear to the converts that at least the sacrificial system was at an end ; but even so, other observances such as distinctions of food, possibly even circumcision, and at any rate the Sabbath observance and the synagogue-meetings seem to have been continued side by side with Baptism and the Eucharistic rite of the new law.

JEWS AND CHRISTIANS.

For the first century or so the Christians were looked upon by the outside world as nothing but a subdivision among the Jews. But this soon led to serious inconveniences. The unconverted Jews began to show hostility to the converts, and engaged in political and other intrigues against them. Moreover, as resistance to the Roman dominion (Bar Cochebas, etc.) brought the Jews into dispute with Government, it was highly desirable that the Christians should bring out clearly the distinction between the two, so as to escape the odium which was attached to the Jews. This motive of expediency helped to clear up men's ideas. Thus before the fall of Jerusalem the local Church had always chosen Jewish bishops ; but after that event they began to select Greek bishops instead. So also elsewhere the Christians began to recognise a complete disconnection between the Jews and themselves, politically, socially and religiously. This effect was also helped on by the gradual spread of the faith among the Gentiles, which soon reduced the Jewish section to an insignificant minority. Again, the original Jewish families were soon replaced by generations who had never been under the old law, among whom the influence of custom and heredity was less felt ; and so it came to pass, slowly and after several generations, that a total dissociation from everything Jewish was established. Circumcision and the distinction of meats soon disappeared from history. Only one point of Jewish observance lingered on for some centuries, and that was the observance of the Sabbath side-by-side with the Sunday.

THE SABBATH CONTROVERSY.

The Sabbath question came to an issue at a very early date. So long as the Jewish converts adhered to their own traditional practices, and left other people alone,

all went well. But there arose a number of sticklers for the Old Law, who wished to impose it on Christians *as such*, and especially on the Gentile converts. As soon as this happened there arose a great disturbance in the Church, and the apostles had to intervene. They decided that the Gentiles at least were free from the peculiar obligations of the Old Law, and in particular that of the Sabbath. [See later].

The Sunday was in point of fact the customary meeting-day of the Christians ; and this day was observed even by the Jew converts, side-by-side with the Sabbath. But the Apostles had given a line of policy to the Church ; and from that time the observance of the Sunday was regarded as the distinctively Christian custom, while the observance of the Sabbath became local and peculiar, and was looked upon askance as "Judaising." Thus St. Ignatius of Antioch, a contemporary of St. John (A. D. 112) spoke of Christians as "not sabbathising, but living in the spirit of the Lord's Day." Justin Martyr, the *Didache*, Pliny, etc., bear witness to one day of the week as celebrated by the Christians; and that day was the Sunday, not the Sabbath. The Judaisers, too, began to recognise that there was no place for them in the Church. Hence arose a number of separated "Judaising sects," among whom the Ebionites are described by Eusebius as "half-Jewish by their observance of the Sabbath, and half-Christian by their observance of the Sunday."

THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY.

In the Church itself, meanwhile, the Sunday was being regularly observed as the great day of Christian worship. To this, in the West, about Tertullian's time, (A. D. 200), was added a celebration on Wednesdays and Fridays. In the East there prevailed a special observance of the Saturday as well; so that St. Gregory of Nyssa calls the two "sister-days."

Similarly the *Apostolic Constitutions* (370) bear witness to the observance of the two days side-by-side, though the Saturday was considered inferior to the Sunday. Hence when Constantine the Great (in 321) ordered rest from court service and from town industries on the Sunday, he was not introducing any change in ecclesiastical usage, but merely recognising the existing Sunday custom, and facilitating its observance. In 381 we find the Synod of Laodicea condemning those Christians who observe the Sabbath by abstaining from labour, and telling them rather to rest on the Lord's day as far as possible.

In the West the Roman Church set itself against all Sabbath observance, and even made Saturday a fasting day, in contrast with the festal spirit of the Jewish Sabbath. St. Gregory the Great (A. D. 600) even went so far as to declare that abstention from labour on the Saturday was a sign of Judaising and of Antichrist. After this we hear no more of Sabbath observance in the West. In the East, however, a special observance of the Saturday still prevails down to this day, though with little of Jewish association, and always in subordination to the Sunday.

NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE.

After this short historical summary we can go back to the beginnings of the Church, and see what can be learnt from the New Testament.

In order to clear the ground of irrelevant controversy we start off with the following admissions:—

(1) There is no record of Christ having abrogated the Sabbath or instructed his Apostles on the point. He himself, being a circumcised Jew, observed it with his disciples.

(2) The Apostles, as well as their earliest Jew converts, apparently continued to observe the Sabbath as a matter of course, at least for some time.

(3) There is no record of the Apostles having declared the Sabbath abrogated at least as regards the Jew convert communities ; nor did they forbid the Jew converts to observe it, or discourage them from doing so.

(4) On the other hand we have no record of their having asserted the obligation of observing the Sabbath, even for the Jew convert communities.

(5) Finally, though there is evidence that the Christians assembled on the Sundays "for the breaking of bread," it appears simply as a custom ; nothing is said about its being obligatory, or of its being a substitute for the Sabbath.

We mention these points because in the tracts before us the Adventists labour somewhat to prove them ; which is quite unnecessary for Catholics, as we admit them already and maintain them ourselves. This gives us a broad common ground on which to start the discussion.

THE APOSTOLIC VERDICT.

There are four passages in the New Testament about which the Adventist tracts keep complete silence ; and yet they are just the four passages which constitute our case against them. Let us study these four passages in turn :—

(1) *Romans XIV-5.*—In this Epistle we get an insight into conditions of the Roman Church. The Roman Christians were mostly Jewish converts, imbued with a strong attachment to the Old Law. It seems they were trying to impose the Jewish calendar of days, the distinction of meats, and perhaps even circumcision, on those who ignored them, and especially on the Gentile converts. St. Paul rejects this policy in all its parts ; and in this place he comes out quite strong. After a warning against "doubtful disputations," he pronounces in favour of liberty with regard to meats, and then with regard to days. "Who

art thou that judgest the servant of another ?...One man esteemeth one day above another ; another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day regardeth it to the Lord, etc."

It seems quite clear that this reference is to the claims of the Sabbath, and perhaps other days of Jewish observance as well. If St. Paul had been an Adventist he could never have written in this way. He would have been bound clearly to say " You must at least esteem the Sabbath, but with regard to the rest you are free." Instead of that he declares for freedom all round, and tells the Christians to follow their own taste in the matter. St. Paul could never have written as he did if he had believed the special observance of the Sabbath to be " immutable and permanent law of God " binding on all mankind.

(2) *Gal. IV*-10.—This vehement Epistle was specially directed against the Judaising spirit which had been introduced by certain agitators into the Galatian church. St. Paul reproachfully asks his converts, after their deliverance from bondage : " How turn ye back to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again ? Ye observe days and months and seasons and years ! I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labour on you in vain." He then goes on to explain the contrast between the bondage of the Old Law and the freedom of the New.

The passage can mean nothing except this : The Judaisers were trying to impose upon Christians in general the obligations of the Jewish calendar : the Sabbath and the feasts. St. Paul viewed this movement with alarm, because it embodied a principle and a spirit which was hostile to the principle and spirit of Christianity. If St. Paul had been an Adventist he never could have written in this way. He would have

been bound to write: "The Sabbath of course must be observed, for that is an immutable and permanent law of God binding on all. My reprobation does not apply to the Sabbath, but only to the rest of the calendar."

(3) *Col. II*-16.—Here St. Paul is confronted with the same Judaising spirit, and meets it in the same way. After speaking of "the bond against us which Christ has taken away" he says: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a Sabbath day—which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is Christ."

The teaching is the same, only in more explicit terms. However free the Jewish converts might be to observe the Sabbath out of devotional custom, at least no one was to be forced to do so. If St. Paul had been an Adventist he could never have written in this way. He would have upheld liberty with regard to meat and drink and feast days and new moons, but not with regard to Sabbaths. On this point he would have had to say: "Of course you must all observe the Sabbath; for this is an immutable and permanent law of God binding on all."

(4) *Acts XV.*—Some Jewish agitators had been insisting that the Gentile converts must be circumcised according to the custom of Moses. This involved a principle of far-reaching consequence. For it regarded the Gentile Christians as if they were proselytes to Judaism, and implied that the Old Law as a whole held good. The Apostles thereupon assembled in Council, in course of which St. Peter asked: "Why tempt ye God, that you should put a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" St. James then observes: "My judgment is that we trouble not them who from the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write to them that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from

fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

This decision was put into effect. A letter was written saying: "Inasmuch as we have heard that certain men which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls...it seems good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication—from which if ye keep yourselves it shall be well with you."

THE POINTS EMPHASISED.

Observe the points which are emphasised. The Gentile converts had special difficulty in separating themselves from idolatry; and the first point on sacrificial meats is to help them in this. They had great difficulty in avoiding the licentiousness of their pagan surroundings; and the note about fornication is to help them in this. The only point of Jewish observance imposed on them is a subsidiary one against eating strangled meats with blood. It is interesting to note that in subsequent ages no notice was taken of this rule. Christians of to-day, whether Catholic and Protestants, pay no attention to it, and have no scruple about it. This shows that by the general consent of Christendom it was only a temporary provision, intended to enable Jewish and Gentile converts to mix socially and take their meals together without offence.

Thus in modern times a missionary body working among Brahmins might be instructed to abstain from flesh-meat, as a concession to Brahmin prejudices.

THE ROOT PRINCIPLE IMPLIED.

But the enactment is less eloquent in what it says than in what it implies. It meets the whole Judaising

movement with a sweeping repudiation. It recognises that Christians as such are free from all the bonds of the Old Law as such. They are to derive their doctrine and their practice from the Apostolic teaching of the Gospel; and whatever is not taught under that Gospel is nothing to them. The Jew converts, it seems, might continue to observe such parts of the Mosaic law as custom and their taste and inclination might dictate. They might go on even with circumcision if they liked; they might go on with distinction of meats; they might go on with their meetings on the Sabbath as before. For those of this disposition (as St. James remarks) the synagogue-practice instituted of old was still kept up in the cities. But if it came to holding that these observances were obligatory on Christians as such, this was an utter mistake. Hence the Gentile converts were not to be molested; their faith is not to be subverted by such perverse and unchristian doctrines. They are to enjoy the freedom with which Christ has made them free.

A CLEAN SWEEP.

The apostolic enactment, in short, makes a clean sweep of the ties of the old dispensation as such; and among other points, it makes a clean sweep of the Sabbath obligation. If the Apostles had been Adventists they never could have thought and decided like this. They would have been obliged to write: "The ten commandments of Moses are immutable and permanent laws, and among them is the commandment to observe the Sabbath. Therefore keep the ten commandments, including the Sabbath law. As to the rest of the Jewish laws and customs you may leave them alone, as they do not concern you. But the Sabbath and other commandments you must observe as binding on all mankind."

If by a stroke of magic the Adventists of the nineteenth century could be carried back through time, and

dumped down in the apostolic or any other primitive age, it is quite clear how they would be regarded by the Christian world. "Who are these Adventists (St. Paul would ask) that judge the servants of God and want to impose on us the Sabbath?" (Cf. Romans XIV). "Who are these Adventists who try to turn you back to the weak and beggarly rudiments? They actually tell you to observe days!" (Cf. Gal. IV). "Who are these Adventists that judge you in respect to a feast day or Sabbath; who cling to the shadow while we have reached the substance?" (Cf. Col. II). "Who are these Adventists (asks St. James) who are troubling you with words and subverting your faith? It seems good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay on you no such burdens" (Cf. Acts XV). St. Ignatius would call them "sabbathizers" in contrast to Christians. Justin Martyr would say: "We observe the Sunday, and know nothing of the Sabbath." The Laodicean church would say: "These Adventists are Judaisers. Take no notice of them, and adhere to the Sunday." Constantine the Great would say: "You Adventists seem to be queer people. All the Christians I know of ask for rest on the Sunday, while you want it on the Saturday. Why cannot you toe the line with the rest?" Finally St. Gregory the Great, after listening to their arguments proving that he (as pope) was Antichrist, would laugh and reply: "That is just what I have been saying about you."

The Adventists would have fared less well in those primitive days, when a healthy intolerance of error prevailed, than they do in this indifferent age. They would not be recognised as true Christians, but would be reprobated and condemned as harkers back to the beggarly elements, and as Judaising heretics.

PART III. THE SABBATH, CONTINUED.

At first sight it seems puzzling to read the very strong language of St. Peter at the Council of Jerusalem, and of St. Paul in many of his Epistles, against the Old Law, which is spoken of as a collection of "beggarly elements" and an insufferable burden which it is a matter of congratulation to have got rid of. For the Old Law was after all the work of God; and judging from the Psalmist, rather a delight than a burden. The explanation is twofold: First, that the Old Law had been turned into an intolerable incubus by the Scribes and Pharisees, and this was concretely the Law which the Judaisers tried to impose. Secondly, by their aggressiveness these Judaisers had made themselves an insufferable nuisance, and naturally provoked stronger language than would be necessary in a calm academic debate.

CONTEMPT FOR OBSERVANCES.

One of the noticeable points of the Pauline diatribes is an apparent contempt for *all* observance of times and seasons. From which the Adventists might easily educe a rather smart retort: "If you use St. Paul's words as condemning the Sabbath observance, they are equally applicable to the Sunday observance, which thus falls under the same condemnation."

But the retort loses its effect by an appeal to common-sense. In that emergency the Apostle had to fight against an objectionable formalism regarding the observation of days; and he condemned it roundly without making those distinctions which under other conditions he would have had no difficulty in admitting. Already the Christians were commemorating the resurrection on a fixed day by the Eucharist and the *agapæ*—something so natural as to commend itself to every mind. True we find it simply as a custom, and

nothing is said of any obligations attached to it—probably for the simple reason that the new Christians were too fervent to need any. There is, however, no doubt that if the Apostle had found slackness creeping in, he would soon have admonished the Christians to attend their duties better. It is obvious that if things are to be "done decently and in order," in any society, some organisation binding on the members is necessary. Every Christian sect to-day has its recognised obligations based on this principle; and no one would charge them on that account of going against the Apostle's teaching, or of outraging the spirit of liberty. In this way can be explained (even without appealing to the power of the Church) the gradual upgrowth of legislation in later ages: first with regard to the Sunday rest in order to give leisure for worship, and then to attendance at Mass as the form which that worship should take. Hence a little sensible reflection deprives such a retort of any force it might seem to have.

THE SABBATH IN CHRISTENDOM.

The Adventists acknowledge that the Old Law was abrogated in many substantial points such as circumcision, the sacrificial system, the distinction of meats, legal impurities and the rest, but find an exception in the ten commandments, which they take to be immutable and permanent, and binding on all mankind at all times. We have already admitted that with the exception of the universal prohibition of images and the Sabbath observance, the ten commandments *are* immutable and permanent; for the simple reason that they are (as we have said before) only a clear exposition of the natural law. It is also part of the natural law that man should worship God from time to time, and should therefore have leisure for such worship; and in this limited sense of underlying principle the Sabbath law is also permanent. But the fixing of the

interval and the exact day, either for worship or for rest, is not determined by the natural law. The fact that the Sabbath commemorated God's rest from creation does not alter the case ; for there is nothing in the nature of things to determine that we should celebrate God's rest, any more than we should celebrate God's work. The whole thing is a matter of positive legislation which depends for its continuance or its cessation on the will of the law-giver.

We have already seen from the New Testament that although Christ said nothing about the abrogation of the Sabbath law, St. Paul said a great deal about it. Even he did not pronounce any general edict of abrogation ; but he declared that the Sabbath law simply did not exist as far as the Gentile converts were concerned. This being the case, what about the Jewish converts ?

It seems quite clear that as Christianity was intended to be one religion, with one set of obligations common to all its members, the fact that the Sabbath law did not bind on Gentile converts is a proof-positive that it did not bind on converts from Judaism either. One of the features of Christianity, as declared by St. Paul, was that it had broken down the partition-wall between Jew and Gentile ; and that now there was neither Jew nor Greek, but all were one in Christ. The passage from Judaism to Christianity meant the adoption of all that Christianity essentially involved, and a freedom from anything which Christianity did not involve. But in the case of those who had never been Jews, Christianity did not involve any Sabbath obligation ; and therefore it could not involve any Sabbath obligation even for those who before their conversion had been under that law.

LACK OF SUBJECTS.

Suppose however we were to concede, at least for argument's sake, that the Sabbath law still remained

binding on those who had once been under it: What then? Nothing for the Adventist cause would be gained; and this for one simple reason, namely, that in such a case the Sabbath obligation must soon have died out for *lack of subjects to observe it.* Even in the apostolic period, conversions from the Jews soon came to an end, while Gentile conversions were ever on the increase; so that the Jewish Christians soon became a small minority. The original Jewish parents soon died and left behind them children who had never been under the law, and who did not come under it by circumcision. In a few generations all distinction between Jew and Gentile disappeared; and through intermarriage even racial descent was ultimately lost.

Thus if we look round Christendom to-day, we find no recognisable trace of Jewish descent amongst us. I do not suppose there exists a single Christian family which could trace back its pedigree to the original Jewish converts of Apostolic times. Christendom to-day, and for centuries past, is made up entirely of Gentiles, who were never subject to the Sabbath law. Hence whatever might have been the obligation of the Jewish converts of the Apostolic age with regard to the Sabbath, it is clear that every trace of such an obligation disappeared from the Church centuries upon centuries ago—as soon as the Jewish-convert element disappeared. When once this elementary fact of history is recognised, the whole of the Adventist contention falls to the ground.

THE MEANING OF SUNDAY.

Having thus entirely got rid of the Sabbath, the next point is to explain what our position is with regard to the Sunday, both as an institution in itself, and also in relation to the Mosaic Sabbath.

(1) We regard the Sunday as an independent Christian institution, having no connection with the

Old Law at all except that of coincidence. A long list of ancient authorities could be quoted asserting that the Jewish Sabbath was confined to the Jewish people, and was a temporary enactment for them only, and that the Sunday observance of the Christian did not *continue* it but *superseded it*.

(2) It is not our practice to say that the Sabbath was *transferred* to the Sunday. Eusebius and a few other writers do speak in this way e. g. "All things whatsoever it was a duty to do on the Sabbath we Christians have transferred to the Sunday." But Eusebius was not a very exact theologian, and his expression was not usual. The right way of saying it would be "All obligations of rest and worship which were fulfilled by the Jews on the Sabbath are fulfilled by the Christians on the Sunday."

(3) The expression: "The Christian Sabbath," though possibly found in a few medieval writers, was substantially a Protestant invention. It arose from their disposition to put the Old and the New Testament on an equal footing because both were parts of the word of God. This led them to "Judaize" in various ways, especially in the observance of the Sunday with semi-Jewish rigour. They took the Sunday for granted as the right day for Christians; but instead of regarding it as an independent Christian institution *parallel* to the Sabbath, they took it for a *substitution* in the sense of a *transfer*, and derived its binding force from the Old Law not from the New. Hence the Adventist idea that the Sabbath Law is immutable and permanent; only they are logical enough to see that if so, no one had a right to transfer it to another day of the week. Against Protestants, therefore, they can score considerably.

EXAGGERATED STATEMENTS.

Some Catholic controversialists have indulged in exaggerated statements out of which the Adventists

have made capital against their Protestant brethren. In a tract before us several are quoted, the gist of which runs as follows :—"In the Bible God issued the command 'Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day'; but Christians (including Protestants) ignore the Sabbath day and observe the Sunday instead. Catholics, trusting in the Church, are justified in this ; but Protestants, relying on the Bible alone, are not. From end to end of the Bible there is not a word justifying the abandonment of the Sabbath ; and Protestants, in doing so, are setting aside the Bible and accepting the teaching of the Church instead."

This, we say, is an exaggeration. Those four passages we have quoted do clearly prove that the Apostles declared the Sabbath not binding on Gentile converts. This leaves the *possibility* that it might still be binding on circumcised Jewish converts; but if so, the obligation would die out as soon as the offspring of these converts ceased to be circumcised. In any case medieval and modern Christians are all descendants of Gentile converts, and therefore *by apostolic ordinance*, recorded in the Bible, the Sabbath observance is non-existant as far as we are concerned.

Even Kellner (Heortology) is not quite exact in expression. He says: "There is no evidence of the Sabbath having been abrogated by Christ or the Apostles ; but St. Paul declared its observance was not binding on Gentile converts, who soon formed the majority of those converted to the faith." In this statement the second clause corrects the first. The declaration of St. Paul is in effect an apostolic abrogation.

(2) Catholic writers are also sometimes inexact in saying that " the Sabbath was by the Church transferred to the Sunday." This inaccuracy is well corrected by *Smith and Cheetham* in the following passage :— "The notion of a formal substitution by apostolic

authority of the Lord's Day for the Jewish Sabbath, and the *tranference* of the Sabbatical obligation to the Sunday, has no basis whatever either in the Holy Scripture nor in Christian antiquity. In the early ages the Sabbath was invariably regarded as representative of the rigid law which has passed away ; the Lord's day of the freedom of the Gospel which remains for ever. The ideas symbolised by the two days are constantly distinguished, and not unfrequently contrasted. It is true that the Lord's day, in becoming the great weekly festival of Christianity, assumed something like the place of the Sabbath ; but the idea afterwards embodied in the title of the "Christian Sabbath," and carried out in ordinances of Jewish rigour, was, as far as we can see, entirely unknown in the early centuries of Christianity."

This statement is correct. There was no formal substitution and no transference. The Sunday was a new and independent creation, embodying elements of the Sabbath idea but not dependent on it, or deriving force or authority from it.

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST.

The Adventists are not content with condemning the whole of Christendom for suppressing the Sabbath and substituting the Sunday. They go on to tell us who was to blame for the change. Ignoring the fact already shown that the apostles were responsible for it, they throw the blame on the Emperor Constantine and the Pope of the time, St. Silvester. We have already seen that Constantine introduced no change in the Christian practice, but merely facilitated the Christians in their existing practice of observing the Sunday. On this false basis, however, the Adventists lay the blame of the change on the Papacy, and then proceed to prove that the Pope is the "man of sin," the Beast of Revelation, and so on. This is of course a

well-worn Protestant theme dating from the Reformation. To it the Adventists add a new feature, namely, that the mark of the beast mentioned in Revelation is nothing other than the Sunday observance. A deal of clumsy ingenuity is expended on these propositions, which we do not deem it profitable to deal with. More by way of amusement than anything else we will take up one point, namely, the famous "number of the beast."

BEASTLY ARITHMETIC.

A tract before us quotes Rev. XII-18: "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is 666." From this the writer draws what he calls "an incontrovertible argument" that the Beast is the papacy. One of the Pope's titles, he says, is *Vicarius Filii Dei*; and if you take the letters in this title which stand for Roman numerals, you get the following result:—

V= 5	F	D=500
I= 1	I= 1	E
C=100	L=50	I= 1
A	I= 1	———
R	I= 1	Total 666
I= 1		———
U= 5		

On this we remark as follows:—

People have been playing at the game of discovering "the number of the beast" for at least 1800 years. Some early authors discovered it in Nero, others in Domitian; later on they discovered it in Mahomet. In more recent times they found it in Napoleon, and during my boyhood they found it in Gladstone. Finally during the war it cropped up once more in the German Kaiser.

While answering a question on the point some years ago, the idea struck me to apply the Latin-numeral method to my own name: "*Ernestus Reginaldus Hull.*" I did so, and out came the number of the beast as usual. This is the chart:—

E	R	H	
R	E	U=	5
N	G	L=	50
E	I= 1	L=	50
S	N		
T	A	Total	666
U=5	L= 50		
S	D=500		
	U= 5		
	S		

Here we have "an incontrovertible argument" that the Editor of THE EXAMINER is the Beast of Revelations! *Risum teneatis amici!*

To pass from the funny to the serious: The only really plausible discovery of the beast we know of is the earliest one, which finds him in Nero (Nero, Neronis); not in the Greek or Latin language but in the Hebrew. NERON KÆSAR turned into Hebrew letters does really give 666. But even so, the guess is precarious because we do not know whether St. John meant the name to be taken in Hebrew or not.

The whole question of the interpretation of Revelation is bound up with the greatest obscurity. But as we shall have to return to the subject again in the sequel, we can leave it alone here.

PART IV. THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

Out of the prophetical books of the Bible (especially Daniel and the Apocalypse or Revelation) the Adventists have extracted a system of events connected with the end of the world, which for completeness in detail can claim to rival any other out of the many and varied schemes which have been devised. Put concisely their system is this :—

(1) In the year 1844 there began in heaven a process which is called "cleansing the sanctuary," or an investigation into the sins of mankind both living and dead, so as to determine who are worthy to take part in the *first resurrection*—the resurrection of the *just*.

(2) When this process is finished (and it will not take long) the *first resurrection* will take place. Christ will appear in the sky ; and the just, both living and dead, will be caught up to heaven in their bodies endowed with immortality. But the wicked will not rise ; and those who are alive will be killed by the glory of Christ's coming. The whole earth will thus be left empty and desolate ; all the good being in heaven, and all the wicked in their graves.

(3) This will go on for a thousand years, during which the devil, having no one to harrass or tempt, will be metaphorically "bound," while the just in heaven will sit and prepare judgments on the wicked and on the fallen angels.

(4) At the end of the thousand years the *second resurrection* will take place—the resurrection of the *wicked*. First the heavenly Jerusalem will descend to earth. Then the wicked will be raised from the graves, and Satan will be let loose on them for a short time. He will gather them together into an army to beseige the New Jerusalem, and to fight against the just who dwell therein. But God will soon intervene and destroy

them. After a solemn judgment they will be cast into a pool of fire to suffer punishment for a time, and there they will burn till they are absolutely consumed. At length the wicked will be totally annihilated. Meanwhile the earth will be renovated, and the just will find in it a happy home for ever.

This scheme is built up with painstaking ingenuity out of a mosaic of Scripture passages, so carefully thought out and adjusted that, taken as presented, it hangs together wonderfully well. But the whole question is whether it is true. First, does it take in *all* the Scripture evidence? On examination we find that it does not. It leaves out of count certain passages which will not fit in with it, and which are in fact incompatible with it and contradict it.

This we shall show in the sequel. But before doing so, we must disclaim any intention of setting up a rival system, for the simple reason that we repudiate the whole principle on which such systems are constructed. They are constructed on the assumption that all prophecy is essentially clear and intelligible to any one who takes pains to read it carefully. On the contrary we hold that prophecy as a matter of fact is obscure, at least in most of its parts; and that as a rule it is not intended to give us a definite foreknowledge of the future, but only to convey a general impression, or to strike home some great moral or religious truth. It is, as a rule, only when the event occurs that we can look back and realise that it was foretold.

A BABEL OF INTERPRETATIONS.

Nor is this attitude based on *a priori* assumptions; it is the sure and well-tested outcome of long experience.

Attempts, sporadic and systematic, have been made in all ages to interpret, for instance, the prophetic visions of Daniel. The older exegetes found its fulfilment completed partly in Antiochus Epiphanes, and

partly in the coming of Christ. Some moderns, however, have not been satisfied with this, but have tried to extend it to more recent times ; some bringing it down to the fall of pagan Rome, others extending it right down to our own days.

As regards the Apocalypse the modes of interpretation have been legion. The letters to the seven churches were in early times taken to refer directly and solely to the local churches of the period. Others later on have found in them a deeper meaning, viz., that they represent seven periods of history which can be identified ; and they try to determine in which of these ages we are now living, and how near we are to the end. The beast has been discovered in almost every leading figure in history who has had enemies, from Nero to the German Kaiser. Others have identified him with Antichrist, who is expected to come in the latter days, and is by some regarded as a single person, and by others as an atheistic movement or irreligious *Zeitgeist*. Some have identified the scarlet woman and the whore of Babylon with Pagan Rome, and others (Protestants of course) with Papal Rome. These latter also find in the Papacy both Antichrist and the beast. The descriptions of the end of the world are by some taken in strict literalness as representing concrete events, while others acknowledge a mixture of the literal and the allegorical. Finally many are convinced that the Apocalypse is altogether an allegorical document, expressing in dramatic and picturesque form certain great religious and moral truths, which are thus stamped vividly on the mind. These give up as irrelevant any attempt to interpret the Apocalypse in terms of detailed fact.

The results of these different methods have been as varied as the methods themselves ; so that one interpretation contradicts and cancels another, and leaves

us in the end involved in a greater puzzle than when we began.

THE USE OF THESE PROPHECIES.

Hence it is extremely difficult to take any particular view seriously. Common-sense suggests that a book which has led to such wildly diverse modes of interpretation, no one of which seems more convincing than another, cannot have been intended by God to expound a clear system of prophecy, open to the intelligence of any one who will take the trouble to read it seriously. If it is asked for what purpose such a book could have been inspired, the simplest and most convincing answer is that *God intended it to serve the purpose which it has actually served.* It has certainly served as a mine of religious imagery of a marvellously vivid kind, impressing deeply on our mind the majesty and power of divine providence, and bringing out the vital opposition between the forces of good and evil, the penetrating character of God's judgment and the inevitable outcome of the divine justice. If the book has actually served this admirable purpose, common-sense (I repeat) suggests that *that was the purpose which God intended it to serve.* On the other hand, the one thing which the book has not done for us is to provide a prophetic insight into the course of future events, and the date of the consummation of the world. In every age, on the strength of this book, people have been telling the world that the end was nigh ; yea even at the doors. But every such fixture proved fallacious ; the event did not come off. After 1800 years of such tantalising experience we remain just as we were before. By one interpretation or another every sign of the coming has been fulfilled times out of number ; and so the end might have come centuries ago, and might come to-morrow. On the other hand, just because all the signs have apparently been fulfilled so often, the end may be extremely remote.

As a result, we find it quite impossible to take the Adventists seriously in this matter. We can only look on with a sort of sympathetic amusement, and pass the whole business by.

This has been the attitude of the Church throughout the ages. She has made full use of the Apocalypse in her liturgies and her sermons, for sake of its graphic illustrations of her doctrine. She has allowed her children to work out interpretation after interpretation at their own sweet will, but on their own responsibility. She has never attempted to pass judgment on such interpretations, but has left them to the law of the survival of the fittest; with the result that very few of them have survived. She has watched failure after failure, and allowed the object-lesson to speak for itself. While watching these futile attempts she has never ventured on any interpretation of her own. She has left the book as mysterious as she found it, and as evidently God Almighty himself intended it should remain.

THEOLOGICAL POINTS.

But there are some points involved in the Adventist interpretation in which we are keenly interested, because they touch on points of doctrine. The Adventist teachings in question are these :—

(1) They hold that at death the soul falls into a state of coma, and remains in that unconscious condition till the end of the world.

(2) When the end comes and the just are separated from the unjust, the just go into eternal life while the wicked are absolutely destroyed.

(3) Hence for the Adventist there is no particular judgment at death ; no purgatory ; no entrance into final happiness or misery till the end of the world ; and their "hell" does not mean eternal suffering, but complete annihilation shortly after the last judgment.

All these doctrines are the flat contradictories of those held by the Catholic Church, and most of them also run counter to the ordinary belief of Protestants. For instance, one of the firmest beliefs among Protestants is that when relations die they go either to heaven or to hell. Bereaved children are told that mother is in heaven, and is looking down lovingly upon them, and that when we die we shall meet her once more, and so on. It is likewise impressed on children that if they were to die just after committing a great sin they would go straight to hell. This is not merely a piece of make-believe. It represents a firm Christian conviction which the Catholic Church fully endorses, though she adds two other points, viz., a particular judgment at the moment after death, and purgatory for the imperfect which causes a delay in entering heaven. The notion of an intermediate state of unconsciousness till the end of the world is only found among the recondite few, or among those who belong to sects such as the Adventists. Then again as regards the fate of the wicked, the traditional belief of Protestants is that they continue to exist for ever in torment. Even if they shirk the terrible thought of eternal punishment they do not deny hell altogether, but opine that its torture will at last come to an end, to be followed by restoration, or at least relief. The doctrine of annihilation is peculiar to a few sects such as the Plymouth Brethren, Christadelphians and Adventists.

If we take a short historical survey, we find that the doctrine of an endless hell written across all the ages from primitive times downwards. When the original genius of Origen suggested a final restitution in which hell would cease and all would finally be saved, the tumult caused in the Church was tremendous. It was a doctrine unheard of, offensive to pious ears, and no-

thing short of a heresy. The particular judgment at death was universally taken for granted. The doctrine of Purgatory does not loom up so clearly in earlier times, but it was a necessary corollary of the two-fold points of belief; first, that after the particular judgment souls went to heaven or to hell; and secondly, that as nothing defiled can enter heaven, there must be some process by which the stubble and straw are burnt out, and the soul is saved as it were through fire. Nor was it believed that we had to wait till the end of the world for this. The day of the Lord was for each individual soul the day of death, at which man's final destiny for good or ill was reached.

Thus broadly speaking, Christendom shows a solid front against these Adventist innovations. Again, therefore, we can appeal to common-sense once more. If Christ came into the world to impart religious truth, surely He would providentially manage that his teaching should have effect, and that Christians should have a true grasp of his doctrine and not go astray in a body. The general belief of Christians for 1900 years surely gives us a confidence which is not to be upset by a small sect of modern upgrowth, who contend that they alone are right and the rest of Christendom in all ages wrong. The situation becomes absurd when we consider that these innovators do not claim any new revelation, but profess to have derived their doctrine from the Bible. If the Bible had been lost for centuries and were now unearthed for the first time, such a startling result might be possible. But since the Bible has been in the hands of millions of Christians generation after generation, from the time it was written down to now, it really seems ridiculous to think that everybody for 1800 years has read it amiss, while these new teachers have been the first to see what it means. The absurdity reaches a climax when the Adventists go on to say

that the Bible is quite a simple book which any body who reads it seriously can understand—as if a book so intelligible as that could have remained a misleading puzzle all the time till William Miller and his followers took it up!

So much in general. Now let us look at these Adventist doctrines in turn.

PART V. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

THE Adventists say that at death the soul, separated from the body, falls into total unconsciousness and total inactivity, and lies in a coma till the day of judgment. The Catholic belief, on the contrary, is that the soul is judged immediately it dies and receives its fate: (1) If in state of purity, the soul goes immediately to heaven. (2) If saved, but stained by smaller sins and imperfections, it remains in purgatory for a time till these are purged away, and then goes to heaven. (3) If in a state of mortal sin unrepented of, the soul goes straight to hell.

Prescinding from Bible discussions for the moment, the Catholic doctrine seems far more calculated to appeal to common-sense. We naturally think that as soon as a man has completed his task he should enter straightway into his reward; and that a criminal, when caught, should be judged and punished at once. It seems contrary to our sense of fitness that such processes should be postponed for years (in some cases hundreds and in some cases thousands of years); a delay which strikes us both as unnatural and useless.

The Adventist would answer that the delay is on account of the last judgment, which is intended to take all mankind together at the end of the world. To this we reply: Granting that God has arranged such a general judgment, this is no reason why He should deprive all departed souls of consciousness till it arrives. The last judgment is a great dramatic exhibition of God's justice in dealing with men; and it would not lose its effect by allowing the just to enter into their reward and the wicked into their punishment as soon as they die. Their appearance at the last judgment, the one group coming from heaven and the other from hell, would not defeat this object. The dramatic result would be the same, namely, that all humanity sees the divine judgment as a whole, which seems to be the purpose which the general judgment has to serve. Catholics certainly view it in this light, namely, as a public survey of the final outcome of human life, by which the success and failure of God's designs can be comprehensively realised.

The Adventist may object that this reduces the last judgment to a sort of play or show, and deprives it of its real character as a judgment. But this is hardly true. Every individual by the light of his conscience must know beforehand what his sentence will be; and yet this does not make the judgment any less real, as an official exercise of the judge's office. Nor does the private and particular judgment at the hour of death, which Catholics believe in, empty the subsequent public and general judgment of its meaning. Even conceding that the Catholic doctrine has some difficulty attached to it, it is not a difficulty of the invalidating kind.

THE ADVENTISTS' EVIDENCE.

The Adventists rest their case on certain passages, all taken from the Old Testament, which seem to speak of

the state after death as one of unconsciousness and total inactivity :—

(1) *Eccl. IX-10.* "For the living know that they shall die, but the dead know nothing more, neither have they a reward any more ; for the memory of them is forgotten. Their love also and their hatred and their envy are all perished ; neither have they any part in the world and in the work that is done under the sun." And again : "Whatever thy hand is able to do, do it with all thy might ; for neither work nor wisdom or knowledge shall be in *sheol* whither thou are hastening." These passages clearly refer to the total separation of the dead from the life of the world they have left, and do not prove a state of unconsciousness after death.

(2) *Ps. 146-4.* "His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return to the earth. On that day all their thoughts shall perish." This is to be read with the previous verses : "Put not your trust in princes, or in the children of men ; in whom there is no salvation, *because they shall die*," and that will put an end to whatever plans they had in life. Hence they cannot be relied on. "But rather put your trust in God, who keepeth truth for ever and executeth judgment," etc. There is here not the least intention to define the state of those who have died. The reference is solely to this life and their power to act during it, which comes to an end as soon as they die ; and for that reason they are not to be relied on as helpers.

(3) *Ps. 6-6.* "For there is no one in death who is mindful of thee, and who shall confess thee in *sheol ?*" This is a cry of a repentant sinner who prays to be saved quickly from his sins, and asks how long he will have to wait. He wants reconciliation *soon* lest he should die, and *then all pleadings for reconciliation will be at an end.*

(4) *Isaias 38-18.* Ezechias sick to death prays to be delivered. He says: "In the midst of life I go to the gates of *sheol.*" "I shall not [any longer] see the Lord God in the land of the living. I shall behold man no more." He prays to be healed, and receives that favour, and is delighted: "For *sheol* shall not confess to thee, nor shall death praise thee ; nor shall they that go down to the pit look for thy truth. But the living shall praise thee as I do this day"; and he goes on to say that he will sing psalms [of gratitude] all the days of his life. It is the naïve cry of a soul that realises the joy of this life, and feels sorely the loss of it. He knows nothing of what will happen after death, except that it will mean a cessation of connection with this life, and of its functions and activities.

Such passages at the most indicate how little the Israelites knew of what happened after death except that there was a cessation of the activities and functions of the present life. Such texts show that they pictured it as a dismal blank, but did really not know whether it was a blank or not.

EVIDENCE AGAINST THE ADVENTISTS.

The chief basis of the Catholic teaching is undoubtedly the authority of the Church as the preserver of tradition. But this line of proof, however satisfying to Catholics, has no effect whatever on the Adventist's mind. The Adventist simply asks for texts, and therefore we will proceed to give him some :—

FROM ST. PAUL.

(1) *2 Cor. V-6.* St. Paul speaks of the desire to die soon. He says that if our earthly habitation is dissolved we have a house not made of hands, eternal in heaven. We groan desiring to be covered over with our habitation which is from heaven. We groan wishing for that which is mortal to be swallowed up in life. While we are in the body we are absent from the Lord, but

we wish rather to be absent from the body and present to the Lord.

However obscurely this is expressed, the obvious implication is that death is a desirable thing to look forward to, because until death we are absent from Christ, and when death takes place we become present to Christ. Such reasoning, and such a desire for dissolution would be meaningless if death merely put us into a state of coma till the end of the world. For then an earlier death would only prolong our coma, and would not bring us into Christ's presence a moment sooner.

(2) *Phil. I-23.* St. Paul says he is strained between two desires ; on the one hand to be dissolved and to be with Christ (a thing by far better), and on the other hand to abide still in the flesh because this is necessary for his disciples.

This again carries with it the clear implication that a quicker death would mean a quicker admission to the presence of Christ. If St. Paul after dying had to remain in a state of coma till the day of judgment, an earlier death would make no difference ; it would merely lengthen the duration of his coma and would not bring him quicker to Christ.

FROM THE GOSPELS.

(3) The words of Christ to the penitent thief (Mt. 23-43) : "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise," whatever may be the exact meaning of Paradise, at least cannot be reconciled with the idea that the thief, as soon as he died, would drop into total unconsciousness and have to wait some thousands of years in that state till the end of the world.

(4) The parable of Dives and Lazarus pictures the rich man dying and going to the torment of hades, and Lazarus dying and going to Abraham's bosom ; both in a condition highly alive and active. The incident occurs

while the rich man's brethren were still alive ; for Dives asks that Lazarus should be sent to them. It is therefore depicted as happening shortly after death ; and of course the fate of both must have been decided by some definitive judgment after death. A parable, as we know, need not necessarily be a history ; still if our Lord knew that the things described could not take place (as the Adventist theory teaches) He would never have clothed his lesson with such imagery.

These four texts afford a strong confirmation of the Catholic tradition, and by implication a positive proof of it, viz., that the soul at death passes immediately to the future life in Christ, and does not lie in a trance till the end of the world.

FROM ST. PETER.

We get a little light (although not very much) from another set of texts. In the first Epistle of St. Peter we have two mysterious allusions to preaching to the dead :—

I. Pet. IV-5-6. "The wicked shall render account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this cause was the Gospel preached also to the dead, that they might be judged indeed according to the flesh, but may live according to God in the spirit." And again :—

I. Pet. III-19. "Christ suffered for sin once, being put to death in the flesh but quickened in spirit ; in which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, which aforetime were incredulous in the days of Noah..."

Early tradition offers us some explanation of these strange allusions. Connected with the clause of the creed "He descended into hell (correctly Hades)" is the belief that while Christ's body was lying in the tomb, his soul went down to the "limbo of the fathers" where the just who died before Christ were waiting till

the kingdom of heaven was opened to believers. There Christ revealed himself and preached the Gospel; and afterwards He took those waiting souls to heaven with him at the ascension. The only hints of anything of this kind in the Bible are found in the two passages above quoted: the first telling us of a preaching to the dead in general, the other to a particular set of dead who seem to have sinned (though not mortally) and incurred a peculiar punishment in the underworld.

The only point we want to get out of these two texts is this: Whatever they may mean in detail, at least they represent the dead (or some of them at least) as being conscious and active enough to be able to listen to Christ's message and to accept it. As far as they go, these texts do not help the Adventist's contention about the intermediate state, but rather tell against it.

EXPECTANCY OF THE JUDGMENT.

Of indirect value are many passages which impose on us an almost breathless expectancy of judgment. One of the difficulties of the New Testament is the repeated and insistant way in which Christ's judgment is depicted as something which not only *might* come *any* time, but which is to be confidently expected every moment. Some of the expressions, both of Our Lord and of St. Paul, are so vivid and urgent that a serious charge has been drawn from them by the Rationalist critics, to the effect that both Christ and the apostles were convinced, as an undoubted fact, that the end of the world was close at hand—so close as to take even those who were then living by surprise. As this event did not come off, and has not come off even yet, their conclusion is that both Christ and his apostles were under a delusion, and taught it to others; from which it is inferred that neither Christ nor his apostles were divinely guided teachers, but were subject to error in most serious matters.

The difficulty is a real one. No one can deny that such an impression breathes out as it were from many texts, and that in consequence such an expectancy did widely exist. St. Paul himself realised this, and feeling that perhaps his own words had given rise to such an idea, he found it necessary to utter a caution (*2 Thes. II-13*) :—"I beseech you not to be easily moved or frightened, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistles as sent by us, as if the Lord's day was at hand. Let no man deceive you. For unless there come a revolt, and the man of sin be revealed, etc." He goes on to say that "the mystery of iniquity is already working," so the event expected might after all come soon ; but it will not come without some previous recognisable sign.

This definite pronouncement does not altogether remove the difficulty, nor get rid of the impression of imminent expectancy which pervades both the words of Christ and those of the Apostles. The Lord is pictured as coming suddenly and finding his servants, some awake and some sleeping. He comes like a thief in the night, so that every one ought to be constantly on the *qui vive*. Now it is true, Christ says that the day and the hour is not known either to the angels or to man, nor even to the son (as man). Still Christ must have known at least that the end was not going to arrive for many a century to come; and therefore those passages *must* have another meaning.

In the light of Catholic doctrine we can find this meaning in the fact that death is liable to come any day and any hour ; and that death means Christ's coming to the individual soul and an immediate settlement of a man's destiny. Nay more, the impression we get is that death was identical with judgment. Thus when the avaricious man is told "Thou fool, this night thy soul will be required of thee" the impression is that his sudden death will be followed by an immediate

reckoning. Again when we read that the Lord, finding some of his servants watching, will straightway make them sit down, and himself at once minister to them, we get the impression that when life's work is done, its reward will follow on the spot. Similarly those parables in which certain defaulters are cast into the exterior darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, conveys the impression of punishment following immediately on a life of sin.

We do not wish to strain such texts of dubious value; but so far as they go, they fit in much better with the belief in a judgment and entrance into one's final state immediately after death, than with a belief that death merely plunges the soul into unconsciousness, where it lies ignored for thousands of years.

PART VI. THE APOCALYPSE.

A THIRD set of texts can be gathered from the Apocalypse. Although we do not rely much on the literal significance of this book, at least the Adventists do; and so we can take them on their own ground. In producing these texts we shall include a short analysis of the book and take occasion to show how we consider that the Adventist views of the two resurrections and the general judgment are also wrong.

ANALYSIS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The Apocalypse begins with seven letters addressed to certain churches of Asia Minor, etc. After that St. John goes up to heaven and sees what things will happen hereafter. Then follows a series of events which succeed each other as seven seals are opened.

After the fifth seal John sees under the altar (in heaven) the *souls* of them that were slain for the word of God. And they cried with a loud voice saying : " How long O Lord dost thou not judge and revenge our blood ? " And white robes are given to every one of them, and they were told to rest for a while till the number of their fellow-servants and brethren who are yet to be slain has been filled up.

Mark this point. The earth is still filled with the good and the wicked mixed together, and the wicked are slaying the good ; and as soon as each martyr dies his soul goes to heaven and lies under the altar. Observe, " souls," not bodies. There is as yet no question of the resurrection, which will take place much later (in Chapter XX). St. John would never have called them " souls " if their whole persons had been present. Moreover, these souls do not go to heaven together but individually. As soon as others are martyred, their souls will in turn join those under the altar till the number is completed.

Then follows the sixth seal ; and before the seventh is opened, the servants of God are numbered. There are 12,000 of each of the 12 tribes (which makes a total of 144,000) but also many others. For when the numbering is completed, John sees a great multitude *which no man can number*, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne in sight of the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands, and singing God's praises. These (it is explained) are those who have come out of great tribulation ; and they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple ; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell over them, and they shall not hunger nor thirst, and so on. This means that there existed a vast number of human beings in heaven long before the first resurrection.

Then follows the seventh seal, after which locusts come out of the pit like an army and devastate the earth. Other events follow in turn.

A woman appears clothed with the sun ; the Beast rises from the sea; and some adore him and accept his mark, while others resist and refuse his mark. While this is going on, John sees the Lamb on Mount Sion with the 144,000 souls already described, sealed with God's mark. They have been purchased from the earth, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth—which again means that they are in heaven with him. Then follow other events; after which those who have overcome the beast are seen in heaven standing on the sea of glass, singing psalms of praise, but unable to enter the temple till the seven vials of wrath have been poured out. Then follow the seven plagues in turn. The harlot of Babylon is soon condemned and destroyed ; but before this happens the good are cautioned to " Go out from her, my people, and be not partakers of her sins."

After this John heard as it were the voice of much people in heaven saying: " Alleluia," and praising God for his judgment on the great harlot ; and then the armies of heaven came forth and fight with the beast, and he and the false prophet are overcome and cast into the pool of fire.

When the beast and the false prophet and their followers have been disposed of, Satan is also cast into the bottomless pit, and chained for a thousand years. He is shut up, and a seal is set upon him, that he shall no more seduce the nations till the thousand years are finished.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

The next event which follows is called " the first resurrection." But before discussing what this means, we will pause and take the survey down to this point.

From the foregoing evidence we see that for some time before the "first resurrection" the good and the wicked are living together on earth in the midst of a terrible turmoil. Some of the just are slain as martyrs of Christ; and the souls of these go straight to heaven, where they lie under the altar. They ask God for speedy vengeance, but are told to wait till the number of the martyrs is completed. This goes dead against the Adventist idea that the souls of the dead lie unconscious till the resurrection; for here we find them living and conscious and active in heaven. Moreover they come to heaven individually as each one dies, and others keep coming in as they die in turn till the martyrdoms cease. Secondly, besides these martyrs we find an innumerable multitude of other people in heaven, of every tongue and nation; and these also are alive, conscious and actively engaged in singing hymns. Yet all these are souls without bodies, for no resurrection has taken place as yet. From this is clearly proved the Catholic doctrine that the souls of the just do not lie in a state of a coma till the end of the world, but enter into heaven after their death. Nothing is said about the fate of the wicked; but that does not matter, as the case of the just is sufficient to prove our point.

Now let us pass on with our narrative. After Satan has been bound, St. John says: "I saw seats, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And [I saw, R. V.] the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and who had not adored the beast nor received his character. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. And the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were finished. *This is the first resurrection.*"

This passage is enigmatic. The resurrection itself is not described; and we are left to guess whether a

resurrection of the bodies of those souls who were already in heaven took place at that time, or whether the resurrection was a spiritual one, namely, the rising of the souls of the just to heaven after death. Unfortunately we have no data on which to discuss the point. But in any case the mere use of the word "resurrection" [ANASTASIS] is not sufficient to justify the Adventist in asserting that at this point a bodily resurrection did take place. For there is no mention of it, nor of the Angel's trumpet which is to announce it. ["In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump"] and the word can be used to express a spiritual rising, as in the text: "He is set for the rise [ANASTASIS] and fall of many in Israel."

THE THOUSAND YEARS.

The Adventists tell us that at the same time when the first resurrection [of the just] took place, the wicked who were alive on earth were slain, so that the earth became empty and desolate. They also explain that Satan was only bound metaphorically, in the sense that the earth being empty there were no just to persecute and no wicked to tempt. But this is dead against the text. St. John tells us that Satan was thrust into a pit, and chained, and sealed up *to prevent him from tempting the nations* for a thousand years. This shows clearly that there still existed nations on the earth to tempt, if he could only get at them.

Again at the end of the thousand years we are told by St. John that Satan was let loose for a time to seduce the nations over the four quarters of the world. So the nations were there all the time. Hence the idea of the Adventist, that the wicked were all in their graves, and that they rose from their graves and lived again at the end of the thousand years, is simply a myth, having no justification in the text.

We next read that the armies of Gog and Magog gathered together to encompass the camp of the saints and the beloved city. So there were also saints or good people still on earth during the thousand years, as well as the wicked. Hence it is quite wrong for the Adventists to say that the first resurrection, even if it was a bodily resurrection, included all the just, both living and dead.

The Adventists seems to maintain that the camp of the just and the beloved city against which Gog and Magog proceeded was the New Jerusalem which had by this time descended from heaven. But this means taking great liberties with St. John's text; for it is only after the final judgment, which occurred later, that he saw a new heaven and a new earth, and the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending from heaven.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

Now comes the last scene. After Satan had been cast into the pool of fire, St. John saw a great white throne, and one sitting upon it, at whose face the earth and heaven fled away. And he saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne. And the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by those things which were written, according to their works. And whosoever was not found in the book of life was cast into the pool of fire.

Nothing is said here of the living being present, but only the dead; and yet, as God is judge of the living as well as of the dead, we must conclude that the living were there also. The Adventists say there were none living at that time; that the just were all in heaven by the first resurrection, and the wicked were all killed by the fire of the Lord. But this, as we have seen, is a gratuitous assertion not borne out by the text.

Secondly, the Adventists say that this judgment was of the wicked only, because all the just were already in their reward and needed no judgment. If this is so, what is the sense of opening the book of life? God knows full well that none of the wicked present before him could possibly have their names in that book. The production of the book of life shows clearly that at least some among those present were just persons whose names would be found in that book. Again, the account closes by saying that all whose names were not written in the book of life were cast into the pool of fire. This clearly implies that some among the crowd were in the book of life, so not all were cast into the fire. We therefore conclude that this judgment was a general judgment for all mankind; that it included the living and the dead, the just and the wicked.

THE SEPARATION.

Beside the reasons already given, we must recall the statement that "all have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Now in the whole of the Apocalypse we never read a word of any other judgment seat but this; and so we conclude that all mankind must have been present at it. Nay, Christ himself tells us this in so many words. He says that when the Son of Man shall appear in his majesty, and all nations shall appear before him, He will separate the sheep from the goats (Mt.-XXV. 31). This shows clearly that the just and the wicked are all judged together; for if only the wicked were present there would be no sheep to separate. As we have already seen, the just (or some of them) were already in heaven. Yet in spite of this, they would still have to come before the great white throne, only to hear their names read out from the book of life and listen to the words: "Come ye blessed of my Father." In short, the Adventist description of the final judgment as a judgment of the wicked only is

not justified by the evidence, and is the outcome of their pre-conceived notion as already described.

Taking all in all, therefore, we come to two conclusions: First, any Catholic reading the Adventist literature as it stands might easily be impressed by the array of texts by which they support their doctrines, and imagine that they made out a case against the teaching of the Church. But the Adventists display a habit of leaving out all the texts that tell against their position; and as soon as these are produced their contentions collapse and fall to the ground.

There remains now only one more point of importance, and that is the question of the ultimate fate of the wicked. Do they continue in the pool of fire for ever, or are they, after some period of suffering by way of punishment, utterly consumed and annihilated?

To this final question we now turn.

PART VII. THE SECOND DEATH.

It is to be noticed that St. John alludes to the first resurrection but does not describe it; and the second resurrection he describes, but does not name it. Instead of that, he speaks of the relation between the first *resurrection* and the second *death*, saying that "those who partake in the first resurrection have nothing to fear from the second death." The second death is clearly identified with the casting of the wicked into the pool of fire; and although the first death is not expressly mentioned, it evidently means the death which occurs at the end of our earthly life.

The Adventists take the second death to mean total annihilation, and therefore it is necessary to make a study of the meaning of the word "death."

PHYSICAL DEATH.

The only death we have any experience of is that of the animals and of man. In case of animals, we believe that the death of the body carries with it the obliteration of the animal-soul or vital principle, and this may be called total annihilation. As regards man, however, we believe that death means the cessation of life in the body, but the survival of the soul in a separated condition. Therefore in case of man there is nothing in the word death to imply *total* annihilation. In the first death the soul at least survives; but what happens at the second death?

Three alternatives can be enumerated:—

(1) Annihilation of the body with survival of the soul. But no one, so far as we are aware, has ever propounded this theory.

(2) Annihilation of body and soul after a certain spell of punishment. This is what the Adventists maintain.

(3) Permanent survival of soul and body; but spiritual death in the sense of the loss of heaven, and of all that makes life worth living. This is the Catholic contention.

The question therefore lies between the second and third alternatives: Which does the Scripture teach, total annihilation or merely spiritual death?

NOT ANNIHILATION.

At the outset we are quite safe in asserting that the Scripture nowhere teaches annihilation. We read that "the wages of sin is death," and that the wicked are "doomed to destruction." But as regards the word *death*, this (as we have seen) does not involve annihilation, but only at most the separation of soul and body. Hence nothing can be made out in favour of the Adventist theory from the word death.

The word *destruction* again, though it might *include* annihilation, never *means* annihilation. "Destruere" originally means no more than dismemberment, or the scattering of a thing about, so that it ceases to be what it was, and becomes some kind of ruin.

When the wicked are threatened with destruction in the Old Testament this only involves their reduction to powerlessness, or at most their death—never their total annihilation. Nor is there the least justification for interpreting the same terms otherwise in the New Testament. In some places physical death is referred to as the consequence of Adam's sin. But apart from this, death as applied to sinners never need mean more than the loss of the grace of God and of eternal life in heaven. Nowhere again need *destruction* mean more than moral or physical ruin or the loss of one's final destiny.

In many cases death seems to mean no more than a sort of functional inhibition, or inability to participate in the benefits of God's favour and grace. Thus the state of sin is called death even during this life; that is, the loss of the vital power which springs from moral union with God. From this loss a man can recover by repentance, and thus he "delivers his own soul from death." By beginning to live in Christ he becomes dead to sin. We are even said to die and be buried with Christ in baptism; that is, we die to sin. Or again we become dead to the flesh in order that we may live to Christ or to the spirit.

The whole of the New Testament is filled with this metaphorical allusion to death. Yet never does it literally mean death either of soul or body, in the sense of cessation to exist; but rather it means functional inhibition, or loss of spiritual activity, or deprivation of spiritual well-being. Heaven on the other hand is simply called life because it means the fulness of all

that gives value to life ; and no more apt word for the loss of heavenly life can be found than the word death.

Hence, we are quite safe in repeating that *nowhere does the Scripture assert, or even imply, that the final fate of the wicked will be annihilation.* On the contrary the Scripture is emphatic in describing the final fate of the wicked as a state of punishment by suffering. Dead to the joys which make life worth calling life, they are alive enough to the pains which make life not worth calling life. The only debatable question which remains is this : Will their state of suffering presently come to an end, or is it to last for ever?

RESTITUTION VS. ANNIHILATION.

The endlessness of hell is denied by two different schools. Both believe that hell will come to an end, but in different ways. *Annihilationists* believe that hell will come to an end, because all who go into it will after a time cease to exist. *Restitutionists*, on the other hand, believe that hell will come to an end, because all who go into it will ultimately get out of it. Some believe that the punishment of hell will act as a purification, so that all will end in going to heaven. Others think that the punishment will presently cease, to be followed by some state which is free at least from pain —corresponding more or less to the Catholic idea of the *limbo infantium*. Finally among the Restitutionists there are some who suggest a compromise. They admit the possibility that hell may be everlasting for absolutely incorrigible sinners of the worst type ; but these they believe will be very few. These "moderates" do not really deny the endlessness of hell, but reduce it, *in the case of most sinners*, to a sort of purgatory. Thus understood, their only peculiarity is to insist on the fewness of the eternally damned—a doctrine which is not heretical, though it can be pushed too far.

In dealing with the Adventists we have no concern with the Restitution view, but only with the annihilation view. Nevertheless as both agree in denying the endlessness of hell, what we have to say will apply to both.

A NOTE OF CAUTION.

We are now in a position to take up the Bible evidence. But before doing so, we have to register a caution to unwary controversialists on either side.

If we read the Bible in English, the endlessness of hell is obtrusively apparent. The wicked, we read, are cast into eternal fire, inextinguishable fire. They undergo eternal and everlasting punishment; their worm dies not, their fire is not extinguished, and the smoke of their torment ascends for ever and ever. In all these statements the words used, *as English words*, express in clearest terms the endlessness of the punishment of hell. Eternal always mean endless; everlasting always means endless; for ever and ever always means endless; inextinguishable fire means fire which never goes out, and so on. If we had nothing but the English Bible to go by, the whole question would be closed without discussion—and that in our favour.

But the English Bible is not the inspired Word of God. It is merely a translation, that is, a human attempt to put it into another language; and experience shows that when it comes to fine points, translations can never be relied on. The only possible way of getting to know what the Bible means is to read it in the language in which it was inspired. As soon as we look up these words in the Hebrew or Greek, we find ourselves in quite a different world.

MISLEADING TRANSLATIONS.

A few instances of what we mean will be of interest:—

(1) The word "hell" in English has only one meaning, and that is the place of the damned. It is often used in the English Bibles where the

original is in Hebrew SHEOL, or in Greek HADES. Both SHEOL and HADES are altogether indeterminate words, meaning simply the underworld of the dead. Sometimes SHEOL is used simply for the grave. Hence in many cases the translation "hell" is misleading, and sometimes even ridiculous. Fancy making the pious Jacob exclaim that he will "go down into *hell* sorrowing for his son!" The text "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell" refers not to hell, but either to the grave or at most to what we call Limbo. The same mistake has been crystallised in the English translation of the Creed: "He descended into hell," meaning nothing more than Limbo [the Greek text is HADES].

(2) The word "hell" is also sometimes used to render the Hebrew word "Gehenna." Gehenna is literally the valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, where children were once burnt alive to the idol Moloch; and afterwards it became the burning-ground for the rubbish of the city. When Our Lord speaks of three sins of uncharity against a brother, He says that the first involves danger of the judgment, the second danger of the council, and the third danger of Gehenna. The threefold reference is really to the juridical system of his own time. Adapted to modern English conditions the passage would run more or less as follows: "Whosoever is angry with his brother deserves to be tried at the Petty Sessions; whosoever shall say to his brother 'Raca' deserves to be tried at the Assizes; while whosoever shall say 'Thou fool' will be liable to undergo a capital sentence" [Gehenna; i. e. death, and the burning of his body in the refuse-heaps of the city]. And yet in English Bibles Our Lord is made to say: "Whosoever shall say 'Thou fool' shall be in danger of hell-fire!" Of course a man who says "Thou fool" may in a given case commit a mortal sin. But at least Our Lord did not say so.

(3) The Greek word AIONIOS is not altogether correctly rendered "eternal" in English. For in English "eternal" means endless, whereas the Greek AIONIOS is rather an indefinite word meaning age-long, (a cycle or period of time) rather than anything endless. Zorrell defines AION as meaning "a period of which the beginning or end is not thought of." And yet it is *vi verbi* a limited period, because it is often put into the plural (AIONES) and can even take the form AIONES AIONON, or "ages of ages." Hence, although the words AION or AIONIOS *may* mean something endless, they have not necessarily this meaning, and must acquire it from the context if they acquire it at all. To translate these words by "eternal" is therefore likely to be misleading; while to translate them by "everlasting" means putting into the text a finality of expression which is not found in the original. To translate AIONES AIONON by "for ever and ever," or by "world without end," involves the same linguistic fault. In a given passage the words *may* mean this; but the words themselves do not *say* this.

These remarks we have made in the interests of sound controversy, so as to eliminate false and bogus argumentations, and to proceed on unexceptional lines.

This is why we abstain from bringing in quite a large number of passages which are often quoted in connection with our subject. We are leaving aside several rather tempting verses, both from the O. and N. Testament; because though they can easily bear a sense in favour of our doctrine, it is quite possible that they mean something else, and cannot therefore be used convincingly. In controversy it is not enough to show what a set of words *may* mean; we can only rest our case on what they *must* mean. Hence we deem it more effectual to confine ourselves to a few passages only, and to devote all our space to a careful analysis of them alone

PART VIII. ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

THE texts which unquestionably bear on our subject are the following:—

THE SHEEP AND GOATS.

Douay, Mt. XXV-31 seq.—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom," etc.—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting."

A. V. "Everlasting fire." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." *R. V.* "Eternal fire" . . . "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Greek: EIS TO PUR TO AIONION . . . KAI APELEUSONTAI OUTOI EIS KOLASIN AIONION, OI DE DIKAIOI EIS ZOEN AIONION.

Our Comment.

The phrases "aionian fire"—"aionian punishment"—"aionian life," leave it *vi verbi* indeterminate as to whether endlessness is meant. But as to the things spoken of, no one questions that the life promised is endless life; and the inference is clearly that the fire and the punishment are also endless. It is a canon of language that the same word, used in parallel in the same sentence, must be intended to have the same meaning. The fire and AIONIAN punishment are set emphatically in contrast to the AIONIAN life; which carries with it the conclusion that both are endless.

The implication of the passage therefore is quite clear. The sentences are equally final, and the states are equally final—endless life for the sheep, and endless exclusion from this life for the goats. If, as the Restitutionists hold, the goats were merely to suffer

punishment for a time, and then join the sheep in the enjoyment of AIONIAN life, Our Lord would have to say: "These shall go into AIONIAN life *at once*, while the others shall be punished for a time, *before* they go into AIONIAN life."

Against the Annihilationists, on the other hand, we can fairly plead the parallelism of the passage, and argue that if the life called "aionian" is an endless life, the fire and punishment called "aionian" is also understood to be endless. Otherwise Our Lord would be guilty of a deviation from the laws of language which necessarily gives a misleading impression.

DESTROYING SOUL AND BODY.

Douay, Mt. X-28.—"Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both body and soul into hell."

A. V. and *R. V.* practically the same.

Greek.—APOKTENNONTON.....KAI PSUCHEN KAI SOMA APOLESAI EN GEENNE.

Our Comment.

APOKTEINO is the ordinary word for killing in the ordinary sense. It can be applied metaphorically to the soul; but here it is not so applied, and APOLESAI is used instead. This word does not mean properly to kill, but to destroy or ruin—without implying annihilation, though annihilation *vi verbi* is not excluded. The choice of a different word is decidedly against the idea of killing in the literal sense, and therefore against the idea of annihilation.

THE WORM AND THE FIRE.

Douay, Mk. IX-42-46.—"It is better to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished."

.....*46*.—"than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished."

A. V.—"than to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched ; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

R. V.—"than to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire ; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

Greek 42 :—EIS TEN GEENNAN ; EIS TO PUR TO ASBESTON.

.....*46* :—EIS TEN GEENNAN...OPOU O SKOLEX AUTON OU TELEUTA, KAI TO PUR OU SBENNUTAI.

Our Comment.

Although the word GEENNA is used for the place of punishment, it obviously does not mean the literal Gehenna outside the walls of Jerusalem, but is used metaphorically for the state of punishment in the other world, according to the custom of the Jews at that time. That "their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" is very emphatic. True, the expression is taken from the Old Testament, where the literal reference is to something which did actually pass away. But it is recognised as a principle that quotations from the Old Testament can be used in an applied sense in the New ; and in their application they can be intended to mean more than they meant in the original passage. In Isaias the reference is apparently to a destruction of temporal adversaries ; and the meaning simply is that they shall be thrown into the place of destruction and consumed by fire which cannot be put out and worms which cannot be got rid of, so that their bodies will be entirely consumed. When Our Lord applies this passage to the final destiny of the wicked the nature of the subject

gives them a greater force. He is speaking not of a material destruction, but of a spiritual destruction; and his clear purpose is to impress us with the idea that the punishments of the wicked will never come to an end. If the wicked were merely to suffer for a time, there would be little object in adding that their worm will not die and the fire will not be extinguished.

If on the other hand the fate of the wicked was to be annihilated after a spell of punishment, it fills us with surprise to see how many times Our Lord lost the opportunity of impressing this upon us in simple terms. Much as men fear suffering, they fear total annihilation still more. And yet throughout the New Testament all such opportunities are thrown away. Nowhere are we told that the consequence of sin is total obliteration of existence.

In this connection the Adventists distinguish rather ingeniously between everlasting punishment and everlasting punishing. The punishing, they say, only lasts till the wicked are annihilated: but the punishment is endless because its effects are endless—that is, absolute and final annihilation. This argumentation might have some force if applied to the term eternal or endless *death*, but it is hardly relevant when it refers to a continuous process like suffering from a worm or from fire. When Christ says their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished, it points to the endless existence of these two agencies of suffering; but if the suffering is to come to an end by annihilation, it would be senseless to say that the worm and the fire will continue their existence without end, seeing that their function is only a temporary one. In these expressions, that "their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished," we have *one* passage which says, in express terms, that the suffering of hell will never come to an end.

If Our Lord really did not mean this; if He had known that the worm and the fire would only continue till they had annihilated them and would then cease for lack of material to work on, it would have been *so* easy for him to say instead: "Their worm will not die until they are eaten up, and their fire will not be extinguished till it has destroyed them utterly." It is just his failure to say this that (if the doctrine of the Adventists be true) has led all generations of Christendom into a calamitous error, just because they placed implicit confidence in Our Lord's words.

THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORMENT.

Douay, Apoc. XIV-10, 11; XIX-3.—"They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever; neither have they rest day or night."

Apoc. XX-10.—"The false prophet and the beast shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

A. V. and *R. V.* the same.

Greek:—KAI O KAPNOS TOU BASANISMOU AUTON EIS AIONAS AIONON ANABAINEI . . . EIS TOUS AIONAS TON AIONON.

Our Comment.

AIONES AIONON means literally "through ages of ages," or "periods upon periods," or "cycles upon cycles," and *vi verbi* does not express endlessness. Still it is the ordinary expression for endlessness where endlessness is intended, and is often used of God's own eternity. Taken at least with the other passages, it is altogether natural for us to regard it as expressing endlessness here.

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW.

Douay, Apoc. XXI-5.—"Behold I make all things new." And he said to me: "Write; for these words are most faithful and true....It is done. I am Alpha and

Omega, the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth I will give him of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall possess these things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful and unbelieving.....and all liars shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone—which is the second death."

"And there shall not enter (into the new Jerusalem) anything defiled or that worketh abomination or maketh a lie ; but [only] they that are written in the book of life of the lamb."

Our Comment.

Almost at the close of the New Testament we find our previous impression confirmed in a remarkable manner. In the passage just quoted God tells us most solemnly that the old order is at an end, and a new order has begun. "Behold I make all things new"—which in every-day language means a fresh start on a fresh basis. Emphatically the Apostle is told to write down the programme of this new order of things, which includes the following points :—

(1) He who overcometh has life ; and God will be his God, and he shall be God's son.

(2) The wicked have their part in fire and brimstone, which is the second death. This second death, observe, is not annihilation after a spell of fire and brimstone, but immersion in the fire and brimstone.

(3) The final condition of the just and the wicked is fixed and there is no going back. He that is just shall be just still ; he that is filthy shall be filthy still. All men have been judged by the books. Those whose names are in the book of life have gone into heaven; those whose names are not in the book of life have gone into the pool. The book of life is a closed record ; no new entries, no excisions. Those who have been cast into the pool remain in the pool. If annihilation

were in store for them, no question would be raised as to whether they could afterwards enter the new Jerusalem or not. But they are not to be annihilated, and therefore it becomes necessary to say that they are everlastingly excluded from heaven.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION.

In arguing for the endlessness of hell, we do not rely so much on the terms in which this fate is expressed. Entertain as much hesitation as you like as to whether "inextinguishable" really means never to be extinguished, or whether "aionian punishment" means endless punishment, etc. and the real case is not much weakened thereby. Our strong point lies in the impression of finality and permanency which is forced upon us whenever the New Testament touches on the question.

In the first place, as against the *Restitutionists*, the essential idea is an endless heavenly life for the just, and utter and absolute exclusion from that life for the wicked. If endless life were really in store for the wicked as well as the just, the terrific contrasts of the Bible would lose all their force. As *we* understand Christ's teaching, there lies before mankind one vital and supreme issue, between final salvation and final damnation. When once a man gets his sentence of salvation or damnation, his fate is sealed for ever. On the other hand, if the doctrine of the Restitutionists were true, this awful issue would be reduced to little short of a farce, expressible more or less in the following terms :—

"It is obviously a terrible thing to suffer in hell ; but in the end it makes no vital difference. It may be worth while for people to practise heroic virtue, for this will save them from punishment and secure their immediate admission into heaven. But if a man is willing to brave a spell of suffering after death, in order to enjoy himself freely in the present life, it really does not

matter much in the end. After his spell of punishment is over he will enjoy the satisfaction of having made the most of both worlds, while the self-denying good people have made the most of only one. However wicked a man may be all his life, he is running no *ultimate* risks. He is merely arriving late in glory, not a bit the worse for the delay, now it is over."

That disposes of the Restitution theory. As regards the Annihilation theory, the refutation has to take another line. To the Annihilationist we say: However tenaciously you may cling to your opinion, it is at the best merely an opinion. From the Bible it derives no real support, either positively or negatively. Negatively, it is an eloquent fact that nothing would have been more easy and obvious than for God to have said in one simple sentence: "The ultimate fate of the wicked is to cease to exist": and if such a doctrine were true, we have a right to expect that God would have revealed it. And yet in spite of numberless attempts to read the annihilation idea into various texts, no one has ever been able to find a passage in which the doctrine of annihilation is stated, or even *necessarily* implied. In the New Testament God seems to have really laid himself out to enlighten us about our final destiny; and in doing so He has contrived to force upon us (to say the least) the irresistible impression that the alternative does not lie between continuing to exist and ceasing to exist. Always the impression is that the soul is immortal, and will never come to an end. Hence the alternative fates which lie before it are an endless life of happiness or an endless life of woe.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

The Adventists are a sect of recent origin whose general contention is that on a number of vitally important points the whole of Christendom has gone wrong almost from apostolic times, and has remained wrong for 1800 years, until the Adventists discovered the truth which at last was to set everybody else right. Common-sense from the very outset suggests the utter improbability of this. But the situation becomes positively absurd when we consider that these Adventists do not claim to enjoy any new revelation, but to have found out the truth by the simple study of the Bible. As the Bible has been in the hands of Christendom from the first, and has been exhaustively studied all the time by the most learned and pious men, it seems impossible to believe that everybody should have misunderstood its meaning for so long; especially if—as the Adventists maintain—the meaning of the Bible is so clear on these points as to be obvious to the simplest intelligence.

But these *a priori* considerations are not enough for a demonstration. The Adventists claim to produce evidence to prove that they are right, and therefore it is necessary to dispose of this evidence, or to produce contrary evidence in order to show that they are wrong. This is what we have undertaken to do.

(1) *Interpretation of Prophecy.* The Adventists hold as a principle that prophecy is clear and definite and easy to be understood. Experience, however, shows the contrary. History is full of attempts to interpret prophecy, especially about the second coming, all of which have proved false; and the Adventist attempt only adds one more to the previous failures.

(2) *The Rule of Faith.* The Adventists regard the Bible, interpreted by the individual, as the sole and adequate rule of faith. Experience, however, shows

that as a rule of faith, thus interpreted, it has proved a dismal failure, and has only resulted in the multiplication of contending sects. The conclusion is that God can never have intended the Bible to serve as the sole and adequate rule of faith.

(3) *The Ten Commandments.* The Adventists hold that the ten commandments are immutable and perpetual, and always binding on all mankind. This is true of most of the commandments ; not because they were delivered to Moses, but because they embody the essential principles of the natural law of morality. But in two points this is not the case. First : The total prohibition of images was a provisional law suitable to the Jews, but never adopted as a law by Christians. Secondly, the law of the Sabbath was also a temporary law which never became binding on Christians, who adopted the observance of Sunday instead.

(4) *The Abrogation of the Sabbath.* As soon as the Jewish converts began to insist on keeping up the observance of the Sabbath, the Apostles opposed their contention. They declared at once that the Sabbath should not be imposed on the gentile converts, thus showing conclusively that it was no part of the Christian religion, but pertained only to the Jews. On an independent basis Christians adopted the observance of Sunday in honour of the resurrection. Those Christians who tenaciously adhered to the Sabbath were condemned as Judaizers, and either separated from the Church or gradually disappeared.

(5) Even supposing the observance of the Sabbath continued to be binding on the Jewish converts (a point not proved) still this obligation could not survive for long. The Jewish convert families gradually disappeared, and after a few centuries the Church consisted entirely of gentiles. But as the gentiles were never bound by the Sabbath law, it follows that

any such obligation must soon have disappeared altogether from Christendom, though lack of Jewish subjects to observe it.

(6) The Sunday is not, properly speaking, a substitute for the Sabbath by way of a transfer. It is an independent Christian institution, which embodies in itself all that was permanent in the Sabbath idea, namely, a periodical rest and leisure for worship.

(7) We can safely acknowledge that Christ himself did not abrogate the Sabbath; for while he was alive on earth the Old Covenant was still in full force. The decision of the Apostles regarding the gentiles does however amount to an *Apostolic* abrogation. Hence it is that Christians observe the Sunday, not by virtue of the Mosaic law, but by virtue of the law of the Christian Church, quite independently of the Mosaic law.

(8) The Adventists are wrong in attributing the substitution of the Sunday for the Sabbath to the Emperor Constantine and the popes. The popes merely inherited the apostolic regulations on the point, and Constantine only recognised the existing Sunday usage, and made laws to facilitate its observance.

(9) *The End of the World.* The Adventists have constructed out of Daniel and the Apocalypse an elaborate sequence of events which are to take place towards, and at the end of the world. Read uncritically their system seems to hang together wonderfully well. But on examination we find that several important texts, which make all the difference to the case, have been left out; and several other texts have been clumsily manipulated to fit.

(10) We cannot take their interpretation quite seriously, because it is only one among scores of others, all of which contradict each other, and all of which have so far failed. We are interested however in certain doctrinal points in their system which run counter

to the general belief of Christendom, and which we can show to be wrong.

(11) *The Intermediate State.* First, they hold that at death the soul falls into a state of unconsciousness, in which it remains till the end of the world. In support of this they quote some passages from the Old Testament which speak of the state after death as one of total inactivity. These passages however only mean that death causes a total cessation of the activities of this life, and show incidentally that the Jewish mind of that time was practically a blank as to the conditions of existence beyond the grave.

(12) Hence such passages do not prove an intermediate state of coma between death and the last judgment. On the contrary St. Paul teaches us that death would immediately introduce him into the living presence of Christ, thus excluding the alleged intermediate state. Other passages can be added to show that immediately after death there must be a judgment which classes men either as just or as wicked, and consigns them at once to heaven, purgatory or hell.

(13) This is clearly proved by the Apocalypse. Long before the end of the world and the resurrection and last judgment, heaven is peopled with the souls of those who have died for the faith or in the favour of God. They are all keenly alive and active, watching the course of events occurring on earth. If the just thus go at once into their final state of happiness, it is a natural inference that the wicked also go at once into their state of woe.

(14) *The Last Judgment.* The Adventists say that at the end of the world there is a first resurrection of the just only, and a second and separate resurrection of the wicked. The Bible, however, shows that the just and the wicked are all assembled together, judged together, separated as sheep from goats,

and assigned to their respective destinies in heaven or hell at one and the same time. The fact that many of these have already gone to heaven or hell does not interfere with the last judgment, in which their former sentence is officially repeated and publicly ratified.

(15) *The Second Death.* The Adventists, while allowing that life in heaven is endless, say that the torment of hell is only temporary, and that by the agency of the fire the wicked will be totally burnt up and annihilated. But there are several texts which show that not annihilation, but immersion in endless fire is the final destiny of the wicked; and that once in hell they remain for ever in hell, in a state of endless punishment. Nowhere in the Bible is there any passage which states the doctrine of annihilation. Attempts are made to prove this doctrine from the "death" and "destruction," with which sinners are threatened. But these terms do not prove annihilation; they only prove an absolute exclusion from the life of heaven, and the loss of everything that makes life worth living.

(16) The Restitutionists try to get rid of the endlessness of hell in another way by holding that its punishment is temporary and purgatorial, so that after a time the wicked will be delivered from hell and will join the just in heaven. But this view is refuted by the same evidences.

(17) As a general result of our investigation, we find that the Adventists have constructed an extremely plausible presentment of their peculiar doctrines by the selection of texts which can be interpreted in their favour. But they systematically leave out all those other texts which tell against them and make all the difference to the case; and which, when brought forward, entirely refute and dispose of their contentions.

[The End.]

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